

A New Website Resource for Un-manned Satellites on Launch Covers and Postage Stamps

from guest contributors Don Hillger and Garry Toth

A new series of articles about un-manned satellites on postage stamps is being published by the American Topical Association's Space Unit in their journal *Astrophile*. The first article, on the TIROS series, was published in the March/April 2002 issue. The plan is to include many different satellites in this series of articles. Initial emphasis will be on scientific/research, weather, and environmental-observing satellites intended for earth orbit. Later articles will feature other satellites. Although launch covers, cancels, and meters for the satellites are included, the focus of the published articles is mainly on stamps, souvenir sheets, and postal stationery.

To accompany the articles being published in *Astrophile*, and to help identify and distinguish among various un-manned satellites, the authors have developed a Website dedicated to the display of images of satellites on both launch covers and postage stamps. The URL is <http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/hillger/satellites.htm>. Through this Website we hope to verify satellite identity and note errors in images of satellites on stamps and covers.

The Website contains two types of pages. On some of the Web pages satellites are categorized by their purpose. Currently seven types are included: scientific/research, polar-weather, geostationary-weather, environmental-observing, Russian scientific and environmental, military weather-related, and amateur (ham) radio satellites. On these pages the satellites in each category are grouped by name and listed chronologically by launch date. These pages show images of the satellites as available on launch covers (and cancels and meters) as well as on postal items (mainly stamps and souvenir sheets). Reference images for the satellites are also provided when available.



Image of Kosmos 97 (launched 26.11.65) illustrated on cancel on Soviet postal stationery item, from the website

Another type of Web page accompanies each published article. These pages contain detailed tables or checklists of the postal items known to feature a specific satellite series or sub-series. These checklists contain cataloging information for each stamp as well as images of those stamps when available. Currently six satellite series are included: TIROS/ESSA, Nimbus, Landsat, ITOS/NOAA, ATS, and SMS/GOES. The ultimate goal is to create a similar detailed page for each satellite series mentioned on the Website. However, since we do not necessarily have all of the postal items connected with each satellite, some of the details will be incomplete or possibly incorrect. Questionable material and errors that we have found are also noted. In addition, the Website includes links to many useful sources of information about these satellites.

Through this series of articles we share the information we have gathered, and at the same time hope to gain additional information about these satellites from other experts. We would like these checklists to be as complete as possible. However, since this Website is a work in progress, any corrections or additions from other collectors will be appreciated.

Correspondence with the authors is welcomed. Please contact Don Hillger at hillger@cira.colostate.edu and/or Garry Toth at garry.toth@ec.gc.ca. These email addresses are also found at the bottom of each page on the Website.

Image of Soviet cover for Kosmos 15 (launched 22.4.63) taken off website.

